

BMHA Newsletter

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA



Volume 8, Number 3

Jul/Aug/Sep 1997

NOTEPAD

More ink for BMHA.

ARRL has, in a sense, discovered BMHA. We were contacted by Jennifer Gagne, N1TDY, of ARRL's Media Relations Dept, and she is writing a press release about BMHA and our bicycle-mobile activity for distribution to bicycle magazines and selected major newspapers. She will be interviewing several BMHA members.

Shortly after that, we got an E-mail from Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, who writes the Public Service column for *CQ-VHF*, a sister publication to *CQ* magazine. Bob plans to devote two or three columns on these topics: how BMHA members provide communications for a bike event; technical info on operating bicycle-mobile; and the fun of combining cycling and hamming.

Back issues a great source of info.

Lately many members have been purchasing back issues—new members in particular. This past month several new members ordered complete sets of all 26 of the back issues, thus tapping into a large body of information about how our members set up their bicycle-mobile stations, what rigs and antennas they prefer. Back issues are available to members only, cost \$1.50 each postpaid. To see a complete index of all the issues, send an SASE marked "INDEX" to BMHA, POB 4009, Boulder CO 80306.

Bits and pieces.

Don't worry if you see no *Getting Started* column this issue. To put it simply, we ran out of enough space to run the full column, and didn't want to run just part of it, so we've decided to postpone it until the next issue. Bill's next column will show you how to get in contact with the world, using a radio you easily carry on your bicycle.

We need more writings on travel by bike, especially where use of ham radio made the trip safer, easier, or just plain more fun. Make lots of notes and take lots of pix as you travel along. And then send the finished piece, or an outline—your choice—to me at the address below.

When you write a plug for BMHA in your local club's newsletter, be sure to include this information:

"The annual dues is \$10. To receive a sample copy of the BMHA Newsletter and other bike-mobile info send an SASE to BMHA, Box 4009-RC, Boulder CO 80306." This will save our club a lot of trouble and expense. The info will be sent next day.

—Hartley Alley, NAOA, Editor

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HAMVENTION REPORTS

Forum Topic: Public Service

The 8th annual BMHA Forum at the Dayton HamVention, May 18th, was, as usual, a very successful "eyeball" meeting of members and speakers. The main topic of how to provide radio communication for a cycling event was amply covered by GOBA's Bill Sharp, W8HI, and RAGBRAI's Chris Charron, KOPE. Chris, as moderator, was called on to "fill in" for the third speaker, John Einberger, NOMSA, who was called away by an illness in the family. Bill and Chris were kept busy fielding questions from the floor. A short sample of Bill's Q and A follows. —Ed.

Questions from the Floor

On GOBA we follow the rule of having the most reliable communications possible under a real evacuation situation. That means having redundancy where ever possible and standardization of equipment. In other words, we need something that can be depended on in the worst situations (at night, in tornado conditions, and where 3,000 people are exposed). My answers reflect the fact that we on GOBA have had eight years of experience and research on the subject, so far. Most often asked were, of course, questions about antennas.

Q...What kind of antenna is the best?

A...Depends on what you want to do. In our situation, a half-wave end-fed antenna works best for several reasons. Most important, they require no ground plane and can be easily replaced. So, the 5/8 wave you use on your car, won't do the job on your bike.

Q...But, hey, what about J poles?

A...You're right. They don't require ground planes either, and in almost any other 2-meter application, that's what I'd be tempted to use. But we need something reliable in this situation as well as an antenna that can be quickly replaced. (By quickly, I mean, having someone getting a new one to you at the side of the road. No time to go into town and get a replacement). The J pole works well suspended from a bicycle safety flag pole.

Q...What brand of HT do you recommend to the hams who serve on GOBA?

A...Any of the major brands work well. We suggest 2-meter only rigs—dual banders are complex as it is and simply aren't of additional value in areas where we're lucky to have 2-meter repeaters. There should be little concern about repairs as virtually all manufacturers recommend returning the radios for

(continued on next page)

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repair. We do too. As far as features go, a back lit TT pad is a must for night work. The only other thing is a battery pack for AA batteries. Alkalines will give you more power (1.5 V) while AA nicads are rechargeable (1.3 V). Just be sure the radio will give 5 watts out with 12 volts in. We recommend ordering 2 or 3 of the most appealing ones, see how they feel in your hand, how easy they are for you to operate, and then return those you don't want. (*More Questions and Answers in the next issue. —Ed.*)

---Bill Sharp, W8HI

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Bike Ride has Sad Ending

Here's my report on the May 17th, sixth annual BMHA Bike Tour, a 28-miler on the quiet county roads out of Tipp City, Ohio. We did have some problems, including an injury, but even with the problems, the ride participants were glad they came. We had a dozen riders show up, several of which had some great radio installations on their bikes.

The weather was close to perfect, about 70 degrees and just a light wind. Everyone seemed pleased with the pace, although we did spread out some over the hills. Along with road bikes, we had three mountain bikes, two recumbents and a tandem. One of my local friends, Dave Wittman, was leading the ride, which enabled me to move around and make sure the pace was ok.

About four miles out, we heard that there was some kind of problem at the front of the group, and we went up to see what was going on. David Hughes, W5PCM, riding one of the recumbents, had hit some gravel in a turn and twisted his leg under the bike. No other bikes were involved, and Dave had managed to stop without actually falling over. We decided that the best thing to do would be to call for some help.

The Tipp City EMTs decided to take Dave to a hospital in Troy for further attention. Ashby Spratley (KB5ZIH), who had travelled up to the Hamvention with Dave, got Dave's things together and with the help of a good Samaritan in a pickup truck, returned to his van and then on to Troy to check on Dave. Everyone else was still up for finishing the ride.

After our refreshment stop in Christiansburg, we headed for home. The return trip to Tipp City was pleasant and uneventful. The local bike shop in Tipp City had donated a shirt to the ride, which was to go to the one who had come the farthest to the ride. This turned out to be our injured friend David Hughes, who had come up from Chalmette, LA., near New Orleans. Some one said that they had a permanent marker with them, and we all signed the shirt for Dave.

Agnes Hammond (KB0EHC) had brought some great banana bread that was just the thing for a post-ride snack. With the banana bread and lemonade as an inducement, everyone stayed around for some conversation and general fellowship. With all the adversity, I was heartened to see that everyone was still enjoying themselves.

I called the hospital to check on Dave and he told me that he had fractured his femur. The doctors had put a steel pin in his leg. I told him to be sure to let me know if there was anything he might need. I mentioned Dave's situation at the BMHA Forum on Sunday and those folks attending came up

with \$86 to help him out. Al (K0HWE) and Agnes Hammond were leaving after the forum and decided to stop and see Dave, and offered to deliver the money and the shirt.

I was on vacation that week so I went to see Dave several times. I'm sure some of my conversations with Ashby (he shares my interest in railroads) had a sedative effect on Dave. They left for Ashby's home in Knoxville Tuesday afternoon, with Dave looking much improved.

I've had a number of people asking about Dave—BMHA is more of a close-knit family than I thought—and I've been forwarding their get-well wishes. (*I phoned Dave in early July. He's recuperating, but very slowly, because of complications. He'd welcome contact with fellow members. You can help cheer him up by writing to: Dave Hughes, W5PCM, 72 Old Hickory Avenue, Chalmette, LA, 70043. Or contact E-mail: w5pcm@bellsouth.net. —Ed.*)

Some general comments I got on the ride were that everyone liked being able before the ride to contact me for ride details through e-mail and the webpage. One suggestion was that some people would like to ride but would rather rent a bike locally than bring one. I'll be checking this out for next year.

---Jim Gumbert, NC8Y

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Friendly DX is Looking for YOU.

Saw my picture and article in the April newsletter. FB. Tnx. Propagation starting to open to stateside (around 1900 UTC). Would like to work BMHA members. You might find me around 14.165 or 14.180. Also I am active occasionally on the Butterfly Net, 14.226 usually around 21:00 UTC. 73.

---Teddy Neeman, 4Z5JQ, Tel Aviv, Israel

QSL CORNER

In this space we feature QSL cards and other printed items that have a bicycle-mobile motif. Send yours in. We'll run it.



We thought you'd like to see this QSL card of Monte Midkiff, N7TAU. Using cleverly-drawn graphics, he has managed to work in all six of his hobbies. When he's not going uphill on the bike, he's going downhill on skis, or in his kayak. When he's not sailing (under bridges) he's in Lopez kicking *una pelota*; or....he's working DX on his HF rig. Monte keeps busy.

PUBLIC SERVICE

BMHAers Help Colorado's Tour De Cure

The Tour De Cure is an annual one-day bicycle tour held near Boulder, Colorado in early June by the Colorado chapter of the American Diabetes Association. It is a fundraising event with over 400 riders, 100 volunteers and generates approximately \$50,000 to be used for diabetes research.

Imagine providing communication support for a bicycle tour covering three separate routes (25, 50 & 100km), which includes both flat terrain, mountain canyons and peaks reaching 9,000 feet. That was the challenge facing the hams working the 1997 Tour De Cure. To meet this challenge we conducted a radio survey of the planned routes to determine which of the available 2m repeaters would give us maximum coverage with minimum dead spots. We settled on the use of two repeaters; one to cover the mountain area and a second for the flat terrain.

We were fortunate to have a very active ham community from which to recruit the 32 operators required to man the eight rest stops, eight check points, five SAG wagons, four emergency vehicles and three net control operators. In addition we had five bicycle-mobile operators who rode "sweep" (i.e. pedalled behind the very last rider) on each route making sure that all riders successfully finished or were picked up by one of the SAG wagons. The use of bicycle-mobile operators was a first for this event, allowing net control to always know where the last rider on each route was and to make sure there were no other riders broken down on the course. Seven BMHA members served this event: Len Koppl, KDORC, John Varga, WA8ZIA, Stan Hunting, KF0IA, Margaret Hunting, N0MDK, David Perry, N0IBT, Hartley Alley, NA0A, and the writer.



Dave Perry, N0IBT, stops at Rest Stop #5, sends report to net control about riders who reached that point in good shape.

Prior to the day of the event a communications schedule was drawn up detailing each ham's assigned location, start time and expected completion time. This schedule and a comprehensive operating procedure (which included a list of DOs and DON'Ts) was handed out to each ham the day of the event. Net control also had a list of phone numbers for local hospitals, ambulance services, police departments for each city

the routes traveled through, and the county sheriff department. All of these agencies were notified prior to the day of the event to be prepared for any emergency that might arise.

Net control was located at the start/finish, but away from any conventional power sources or phone lines. To solve this dilemma we used battery-powered ham radios and a cell phone to contact any of the local emergency agencies.

The event went off without a single emergency. There were numerous mechanical problems and some sore and tired muscles but not a single scrape or bruise. All riders either successfully completed the course or were picked up by a SAG wagon and returned to the start/finish.

About a week after the event we held an on-the-air critique to decide which aspects of the communication plan could be improved for next year's tour. As could be expected, there were the usual rough spots, but nothing serious.

All the volunteers, for their efforts, were given a T shirt, free lunch, and a water bottle. The hams were given a special mention at the week-later "Thank You" barbecue party that was held for all the volunteers.

—John Einberger, N0MSA

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FIELD DAY ON A BICYCLE

I never get a chance to work Field Day. My daughter's birthday falls on that weekend (last weekend in June), and two birthday parties (family and friends) take the whole weekend.

However, this year I did have a few hours to ride, so I spent three hours as a Bicycle Mobile Field Day station. No logs, but I did give out a few contacts to the more serious contestants. My ride was 50 miles into, on top of, and back down the Santa Cruz Mountains south of San Francisco.

My benefit was that I had a chance to REALLY see how radio coverage exists in my preferred (hilly) riding range. Mountain tops are great, but down inside the canyons (with no repeater coverage) you can still get out. Having a landscape dotted with simplex stations all on 146.520 MHz really helps build a coverage map! And everyone was glad to come back to a Bicycle Mobile station. A beautiful ride on a glorious day!

I had six contacts confirmed. Made a lot more attempts, but because I was very weak (HT with effectively a 1/4 wave antenna at 2 watts) with a view of the whole valley floor, many of my replies were overshadowed by a "bigger gun". Often I only had about a minute to make a contact, because the "nooks and crannies" of the ridge road put a hill between me and the other station. All contacts were in motion (most were while hill-climbing), using the rig mounted on the handlebars and antenna by the front handlebar bag. Microphone was an in-the-ear type.

Next year? The birthday parties aren't planned yet, but I will sure try to make room for another Bicycle Mobile Field Day expedition.

—Skip LaFetra, AA6WK, Sunnyvale, CA

GEAR

Power Packs, Dynamo Hubs, and Such

What a pleasant surprise it was when Hartley Alley called to welcome me to BMHA membership! We chatted a bit and the conversation came around to my interest in cycle electrification. He asked me to submit this article about it.

I'm developing a design for a rechargeable battery pack that will fit into the bottom of a rack top bag. In my case, I wanted more capacity than the normal bag of 11.5" long afforded. So I am now using a Samsonite tool bag that is 16" long. My goal is to have a supply that delivers 48 watts for a duration over 8 hours. The idea is to be able to power a high output lighting system from sundown to sunup on an all-night ride, if necessary. The runtimes of current lighting systems do fall short of this.

It follows that if one is packing this much power, then many combinations of devices could be plugged in, e.g., ham radios, AM/FM receivers, CD player, etc.—whatever one fancies. Even though these devices do have battery packs, a central power source would extend the use time.

I am going to build this power pack into a Rubber-Maid storage box (Model 2219-87). It has dimensions of 13.5" x 8.25" x 3.5". It has occurred to me to use camcorder batteries. I see from Scott Ryan's (KC8CNO) article in the Jan. '97 issue that he has had good luck with them. After pricing around a little, I find they ain't so cheap! Can anyone out there recommend a very reasonably priced source?

This battery pack would be recharged by plugging into household current. However, the charge could be conserved by input from a dynamo hub and/or a photovoltaic array. In the April '95 issue there is an article showing how Bil Paul (KD6JUI) used a Solarex MSX10L PV array for his rig. That was useful information. In full sunlight, that unit develops enough voltage to recharge or run a ham radio direct. Cycle dynamos develop 3 watts optimum, they would supply some pass-through current, but not enough to recharge.

CYCLE DYNAMOS: Laced into the front wheel of my mountain bike is an all-steel Sturmey-Archer Dyna-Hub. It powers a Soubitez halogen light set. Like most dynamos for bicycle use, it has a 3 watt output. Those of you who know would observe that it is quite a hunk of metal to push around. I accept the weight penalty, because unlike tire-driven dynamos, this design allows me to run on aggressively-treaded tires—and in ice and snow conditions, I avoid the problems of roller slippage or freeze-up. It does the job!

I have experimented with combining various dynamo systems with electronic cut-in power packs—cut-ins supply power to the lighting system when you come to a stop. I learned the value of computing inputs when I overloaded and burned out a Union Accu Stand-Licht!

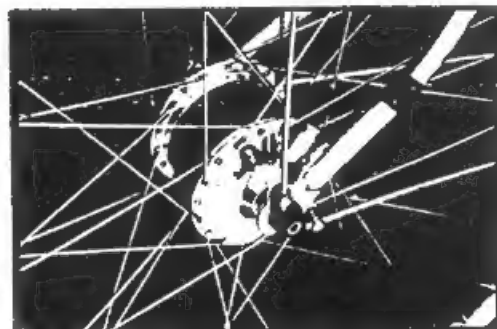
If any of the membership would like to try a dynamo hub, don't look for a 1990's Sturmey-Archer Dyna-Hub at your local cyclery. Sturmey-Archer discontinued production of their Dyna-Hub in 1982. Demand fell as the cycling public became so very weight-conscious and other less expensive lighting systems gained popularity.

Over 37 years, from 1945 on, Sturmey-Archer introduced and produced three models of the Dyna-Hub. Two

were rear hub models mated to a 3-speed or 4-speed transmission. The other is the more well-known front-wheel dynamo hub. With a little luck, one could find a hub in an old established shop or on a used English 3-speed roadster. I got mine off of an old Schwinn middleweight.

NEW GERMAN DYNAMOS: If retro is not your thing and leading-edge tech is, there are two dynamo hubs currently being produced in Germany. They are the Marwi WING and Schmidt's Original. Both are 6 volt 3 watt dynamos. Both these hubs sport aluminum flanges, which cuts the weight quite a bit. Schmidt's weighs only 23 ounces. In comparison, Shimano regular ATB front hubs run from 7 to 9 ounces. Tire-drive dynamos run 2 to 9 ounces. In combination, the lightest hub and tire dynamo to the heaviest, gives a range of 12 to 18 ounces. With the current switched off, these hubs will tax your physical output about 1 watt (more, of course, when using the lighting system). Currently, these hubs are engineered for use in 26 to 28 inch wheels only.

Schmidt's Original Hub Dynamo (rt.) is 65% efficient, has an electrical output of 6 volts and 3 watts when used with a 26" to 28" wheel. Comes with a headlight, switch, and hookup cable.



Neither of these hubs are in stock on any American wholesaler's shelves. Your local cyclery can order the WING hub through Marwi's American distributor. The Schmidt Original has to be ordered factory direct. Either hub will set you back about \$325.00 and expect at least a month's wait.

If your local cyclery is not interested in taking your order, I will gladly take it. You will save on sales tax and I am willing to barter part of the price for a two meter HT. Generally, I am willing to barter cycle goods for radio goods. I am just starting out in hamming and I need everything!

—Angelo L. Coletta, c/o The Great Outdoors
772 N. Main Street
Akron OH 44310 (330) 762-4001

Aussies Welcome Corn Husker.

....I have operated on two meters in Australia and New Zealand—they love American hams! On the three trips I've made there I took along my two meter rig. I hoped to make a few contacts. Those few contacts turned out to be long term friendships and a lot of fun. I made a call on a local repeater asking for directions and Doug, VK3DJY, answered, gave me the info and invited me over for dinner. To make the story short, they've been at my house four times in the US and I at theirs two times. On the last visit I was invited to a summer picnic of the Bendigo Ham Club—a real Australian Barbecue. It struck me at that party that these were the DX I have been chasing for years and they were people just like me. When I visit "down under" I do not feel like I am in a foreign country but just in the next town.

—Glenn Pollock, WA0FMV, Omaha, NE

NEW MEMBERS

We're pleased to add these names to our Membership List:

Larry Christie, KCOAIQ, 809 N Parkwood, Wichita KS 67208

Norma Christie, KCOAUI,

Bill Fast, WB8KMV, 1451 Alpine St, Longmont CO 80501

Mary Jones, KF9ZB, 5670 King James Ct #23, Madison WI 53719

Robert Murdock, 534 Princeton Av, Bayville NJ 08721

Brent Reese, N7GDF, 4915 W. Mohave Way, West Valley UT 84120

Jim Schallau, N6ABS, 2322 Walnut Grove Av, San Jose CA 95128

Jim Sully, KN6NQ, 9081 Mediterranean, Huntington Beach CA 92646

Robert F Thomas, N3CT, 14 E. Brookhaven Rd, Wellingford PA 19086

Gary R Travis, KF6HGE, 9832 Flower St #541, Bellflower CA 90706

Jim Varner, AE6N, 2771 Barite Dr, Lake Havasu City AZ 86404

With traditional ham friendliness, make contact with these new members, welcome them to BMHA, and help them with any problems they might have.

REMINDERS

BMHA Net....on 20

TIME: 2000 UTC and four hours later at 0000 UTC.

DATE: 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month.

FREQ: 14.253 — plus or minus the QRM.

Look for me, NF0N, at those times, and if I'm unable to call the net please look for those who have picked up the net when I've been out of town. In particular, look for Assistant Net Controls Jim Kortge, NU8N, and John Liebenrood, K7RO. Jim covers the East, John covers the West, and I cover the middle.

—Mike Nickolaus, NF0N, BMHA Net Control

316 E. 32nd St., S. Sioux City, NE 68776

For Sale

Do you have bicycle-mobile-related radio equipment for sale? Send in a description and we'll run it. Limit of 20 words, plus your name, address, phone. For members only.

Back Issues Still Available

You may purchase any of the twenty seven back issues of the BMHA NewsLetter for \$1.50 each, postpaid. For info on the contents of the various issues send a business-size SASE to: BMHA, POB 4009, Boulder CO 80306-4009, and ask for the Index of Back Issues. This service available to members only.

Your Bicycle Flies For Free!

As a member of BMHA you get free transport of your bicycle, when you fly on Northwest Airlines. You save \$90 on a roundtrip flight. For details call Wild World of Travel, Missoula MT, 1-800-735-7109. Mention that you're a network member of Adventure Cycling.

If you tell us your bike tour plans we'll publish them in the NewsLetter and help make it possible for you to meet fellow BMMHAers in person or on radio as you pedal along. Just send in your route and the dates.

BMHA NEWSLETTER

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We welcome articles, suggestions, letters, announcements, photos, artwork --- anything pertaining to bicycling while operating an amateur radio, or vice versa.

Submitted material will be edited for clarity and, if necessary, shortened to fit space constraints. Material should be submitted before Mar 1, June 1, Sept 1, or Dec 1 for inclusion in the ensuing issue.

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ABOUT BMHA

For the information of our first-time readers

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a 'Stray' in the June '89 QST magazine asked to "get in touch with hams who operate their radios while bicycle-mobile", signed by Hartley Alley, NA0A. Twenty five hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected data.

In April of '90 we had our first BMHA Forum at the Dayton HamVention. We played to a packed house, overflowed the room, and added 54 names to our mailing list. Our seven subsequent forums have drawn increasingly larger audiences, and now BMHA is firmly established as a 'regular' at this world-renowned event.

This is the twenty-eighth issue of our quarterly newsletter, which has become the clearing house for the exchange of info and ideas for the hams who go on the air from their bicycles. Since the last issue of this newsletter we have added 14 new members. The total membership now stands at 456, with members in 43 states, and six countries. BMHA is affiliated with Adventure Cycling Association and the League of American Bicyclists.

BMHA membership puts you in touch with a friendly and helpful group of bike-riding hams. You'll make contacts through our membership directory, packet and E-mail address lists, bi-weekly net on 20 meters, annual meeting and Forum at the Dayton HamVention and other regional meetings, and of course through the BMHA NewsLetter, which has articles on bike trips, antennas, other gear, operating tips, etc. Membership application blank on the next to last page.



THE CELLULAR HAM

Comparing a Cellphone with an HT

So you have both a cellphone and a ham radio---which one should you take on your bike? You might want to take both, but on some trips that could be too much weight, too expensive, and not practical.

Size and weight: Technology is wonderful. These things are getting small! My full-featured ham radio is only 11 ounces (and some are down to only 4 ounces). My cellphone is the same size. (But I get a full 5 watts of output power with the ham radio, vs. 1/3 watt with the cellphone.)

License: Yes, a ham radio requires a license from the FCC. It will cost you about \$5 to take the test---which is multiple-choice, and you can see the questions in advance. You need to score about 70% correct to pass. Morse Code is no longer required. A cellphone doesn't require a license, but does require money. Lots of money.

Cost: If you buy your "toys" new, both a ham radio and a cellphone will set you back about \$300 each. You can get cheaper or used ham radios for about \$100, and you can get a cellphone for as little as a penny (if you sign up for a non-cancelable year or two of service at \$20/month).

Ham "service" is free (although it is good form to join a local club and help with their repeater expenses---perhaps \$25/year). Cell "service" costs---here in the San Francisco Bay area it is \$30/month plus almost 50 cents per minute of use. Certainly not cheap.



*Skip Lafetra
holds cellphone
in one hand and
ham radio in
the other. Can
you tell which
is which?*

Where it works: Both cellphones and ham radio will work from almost anywhere you need them. Cellphones have "complete" coverage near cities and major highways. Ham radio works almost anywhere you can see a city or a mountain top---hams love to put radio repeaters on the highest structure or mountain that they can find.

Both devices may not work in mountain ravines, canyons, or other "protected" areas, because the mountain will block the radio waves. (Of course, this is probably exactly where you will become stranded on a bicycle....) In this situation, the ham radio has an edge over the cellphone because you can choose which frequency, and thus which repeater location, to try for. This is specialized, but quite simple,

knowledge---if you don't want this concern, then use a cellphone and work with whatever luck you may have when in a "radio dark hole".

Use in an emergency: Cellphones almost certainly guarantee you a quick connection to "911" emergency services---which will probably be the local Highway Patrol office. Ham radio autopatches frequently have a wider choice of emergency services (police, ambulance, park rangers, etc.) pre-programmed into them---but then in a time of stress you have to remember which service to call.

Ham radio is "open"---meaning you can put out a general call: "This is AA6WK---can anybody help me call an ambulance / call home / direct me to a bicycle repair shop?" and usually someone will answer and assist. If you are a member of the local repeater club, you can directly dial the telephone number of your choice.

Casual use: A cellphone is easier (and more private) to call home---just dial the number and you're there. Receiving telephone calls is the same---the phone rings, and you answer.

A ham radio can also dial out---but using a party-line-like feature called an "autopatch". Anyone can listen to your conversation. You can't receive telephone calls at all---hams can call you (and even make your radio ring like a telephone), but the "general public" (and perhaps your non-ham spouse) can't.

Use on a bike trip: When carried as an "emergency radio", either will work very well. But most of your bicycle-related use won't be calling for help---it will be checking conditions at the front of the group, planning a rendezvous, or even just chatting to pass the time.

A cellphone is a one-to-one experience. You call someone, they answer, and you talk. Want to talk, but don't have someone specific in mind? A cellphone is useless. Don't want to pay \$0.50 per minute to chat? Don't use the cellphone.

A ham radio is a many-person experience. The whole group can hear what is said. You can call over the mountain with "This is AA6WK---can someone tell me what the weather is like over at the beach?". You can also call "AA6WK broke a spoke---anyone have an old-style Regina freewheel tool?" to ask the whole group at once. Doing this with a cellphone would be a lot of calls.

Use while bicycle-mobile: A cellphone simply cannot be used safely while riding. You have to hold it to your ear (and mouth), need to dial it, and there are no (relevant) accessories available. Ham radio can be equally hard to handle, but inexpensive accessories are available which make while-mobile use a true delight. My personal rig is simple: just an earphone/microphone combination tucked in my helmet, and a push-to-talk button located on my brake lever. I ride naturally (with both hands fully devoted to the handlebars) and have conversation whenever I wish it. Riding on the "hoods", it's right-thumb in to talk, thumb out to listen. Easy as pie.

My choice: I have both a ham radio and a cellphone. I'd gladly bring either with me on the bicycle. So far, I've chosen to bring only the ham radio, feeling that the cellphone just doesn't add enough value for use on my typical bike ride. Your situation might be different.

---Skip Lafetra, AA6WK

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BITS & PIECES

Liora Makes Comeback!

Annual Round-Galilee Tour (1500 riders!) yesterday a big success! WX turned around at the last moment into perfect weather. The day before was sizzling, but fierce west wind came in during the night sweeping away the desert air from the valley, and replacing it with refreshingly cool air. This time, my daughter Liora (see her story on p.7, Jan '97 issue) made it all the way! Now 9 years old, she rode with me the 50 kms along the beautiful valley road, my XYL standing by on the HT for (this time, unnecessary) support.

---Teddy Neeman, 4Z5JQ, Tel Aviv, Israel

New Hams

They hit the books, sweated, and got nervous at the exam site---just as we all did. But they passed! Since the last issue these members have become licensed hams:

Robert Murdock, KC2CDO, 534 Princeton Av, Bayville NJ 08721

Non-ham BMHAers, please send in your call sign as soon as you get your FCC amateur radio license. We'd like to list you in this column. If you have time, tell us how and what you studied, what helped you to pass the test. We'll pass it on to our non-ham members who are thinking about taking the exam.

Too Much Beer, You go to Gaol.

During the fifties I worked in Scandinavia and one of my jobs was relocating the forest boundary markers on the 400-year-old plantings to stabilize the sand dunes on the north coast of Denmark. I was one of two Americans in an international crew of forestry students. The others hailed from England, Scotland, and the Netherlands. Each morning we slung our instruments over our shoulder and smartly stepping down on a raised pedal, lifted one leg over the seat and bicycled off to the forest. The trick was to do this with only one hand on the handlebars, the other was for the valuable transit or stadia rod on your shoulder. After a while we all became adept at this

Perhaps this cockiness led to my "night in gaol". Around Easter, to celebrate the coming of Spring, the Danes

brew a potent beer called "Paskebrg" or Easter-beer. The crew ate at a local boarding house, a "pensionet". To celebrate the change in season from dreary dark winter some of the boarders had purchased a supply of Easter beer and us unsuspecting foreigners were treated to several bottles. After dinner we mounted our cycles and were peddling back to our house on the edge of the 80-foot Tisvildeleje cliffs, wobbling a bit from the alcohol.

I had fallen behind and somehow banged into an innocent pole alongside the bike path. The impact had skewed the alignment between the front wheel and the handle bars which I failed to notice. But I did notice the local policeman watching me. Wanting to impress him with my one-handed mounting skills I smartly pushed down on the pedal and before I could swing my leg up I had crashed into the same pole and was a tangled heap at its base. The policeman walked over to me and suggested we walk to his home. When we arrived he explained to his wife that the one cell jail would have a guest for the night.

He put me in "protective custody" fearing I would pedal off the cliff into the Kattegat (do you remember a song "We'll sail up the Skagevak and down the Kattegat"?). So I slept it off and in the morning his wife made this huge breakfast with Danish ham, eggs, coffee, and toast with "solbar" jam ("sun berry" jam). Years later, bicycling near Skagen in Denmark with a friend, I remembered the jam and it became part of a poem I wrote to her. But that's another story.

---Ernie Frank, KF4IFE

242 N. Sunset St.

Fort Collins, CO 80521

Order Your Booklets Now!

The two booklets, written by Dave Gerbig, WB9MZL, are still available in the first printing. Titled *Tour Leader's Guidebook* and *Radio Operator's Guidebook*, they tell in detail (22 pages each) how ham operators can provide communication support for bicycle events. The two booklets work hand-in-hand: Ham radio is explained to the non-ham tour Leader, and in turn, the intricacies of a big cycling event are explained to the non-bike-riding ham radio operator. It is suggested that you order one of the first title for each of the non-ham leaders of your event, and one of the second title for each of the ham volunteers. The price is \$2 each postpaid. Send orders with check to:

BMHA, POB 4009, Boulder CO 80306-4009.

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BMHA's Official Logo

The next time you need to order new QSL cards, don't forget to include the BMHA logo in your design. Here's the official logo, as designed by Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U.

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COMMENTS

....Nice articles about the Hilly Hundred in the April issue. I rode my 20th Hilly with my new rig (Yaesu FT-11 and a Diamond 770 antenna on a Vision R-45) and monitored the net for the whole ride. It's a heck of a net!

---Walt Smith, KB8ZQW, Harrison OH

....I must say that I really enjoy the newsletter---it's a great read. Life has been very busy of late with moving house (see new address) and a change in employment coming up. I manage to climb on the bike for a few laps of the local park at least 2x a week---but that's about it. However, there's a charity ride on Sunday that some of us from work are planning to do.

I'm hoping to get back into some homebrew construction too, but for the time being it's house renovations that rule. Anyway, in the meantime I get my kicks reading about other people's exploits in the BMHA newsletter!

It's Friday 6pm & time to catch the train for home! Keep up the good work.

---Jules Corben, VK2EXT, Oakley, New So. Wales, Australia

....I just got back from a 500-mile ride from York, PA to Emerald Isle, NC. It was a great trip but some traffic at times. Had an 18-mile bike path through Washington DC that was great! I did very little hamming this trip as I had companions. Last summer I rode solo from New Hampshire to Ohio and used my HT to keep me company almost every night in the tent.

---Dave Haas, N1OSL, Lancaster, NH

....Went riding yesterday, and had to walk home for the first time in a couple of decades! Fortunately, I was almost home when disaster struck---so I walked less than a mile of the 30-mile roundtrip. I always carry both a patch kit and a spare tube, but I had two unrepairable flats! Ouch. And yes, thinking that my lateness would worry my family, I did call home using the 2-meter autopatch.

---Skip La Fetra, AA6WK, Sunnyvale, CA

....When I sent in my application I jotted down a request for info on antennas and safe placement of them on the bike. I was delighted to receive a couple of back issues on the subject and a hand-written response. What a nice touch! I think I'm going to like your organization very much.

---Mary Jones, KF9ZB, Madison, WI

....I would like to join as a non-ham member. I'm looking into taking the non-code ham license test.

---Robert Murdock, Effective Cycling Instructor #316, Bayville, NJ

....I ran into the BMHA web page one day while surfing the net, and decided right then and there that I had to be a member. So here's my check. Happy Trails!

---Ivan DeLisle, VE7DLO, Grand Forks, BC, Canada

....There are battery packages for mobile use that include a connector, and AC charger, a DC plug (can charge it in the car) and a 12V, 2.2A battery for \$20. Hard to beat. Send for Catalog #GC-1223zzk from All Electronics, 1-800-862-5432.

---Bill Sharp, W8HI, Delaware, OH